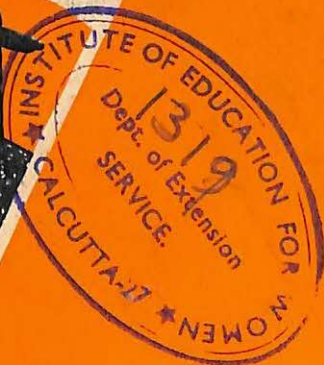


WILLIAM, THE KITTEN
AND
BROOM BUSH
SCHOOL



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WILLIAM, THE KITTEN



From the very moment the orange-coloured kitten was born, he was a lively fellow. Even when his little legs were too weak to hold him up, he often scrambled out of his mother's bed and tried to walk across the floor. Mrs. Clara Cat had to leave her two baby girls and

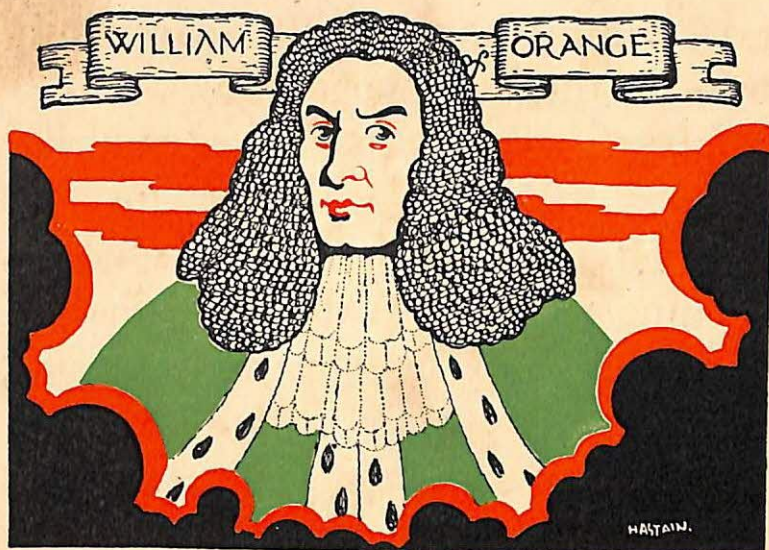


go running after him to carry him back to the nice warm bed.

Mrs. Clara Cat had christened her orange kitten "William," for she had often heard her little mistress reading about "William, Prince of Orange," and as she said to her husband, Thomas, "The little fellow is so handsome, he is just like a prince." So William he was called.

Mrs. Clara Cat showed William how to wash his coat, and said to him, "William, always remember that a nicely brought up kitten keeps his coat clean and shiny, and his whiskers well brushed."

William promised his mother that he would always keep his coat clean and shiny, and his whiskers well



brushed. Then mother told him never to get his feet wet, to keep his claws sharp, and his eyes wide open.

“Now, remember,” said she, “all I have told you, and when you go out into the world you will be a brave, good kitten.”

William did so want to see for himself this world and all the strange

things in it that his mother had told him about, instead of always having to scamper along beside his mother and sisters.

But William saw the world much sooner than either he or his mother expected, for one morning he woke up very early—long before his mother and sisters—and he thought he would creep out of the door to see what he could find before his mother and sisters woke up. So he crept quietly on tiptoes through the open door and found himself alone in the kitchen.

“Meow, is that a bowl of milk I see on the table?” purred William to himself.

Up he scrambled on to a chair, and from there to the table, and



then he quickly lapped up all the thick cream from the bowl of milk.

“Oh! that makes a kitten feel good early in the morning,” said William, stretching himself. “But I’d better wash my face, in case I have left any sticky marks on it.”

After he had finished cleaning himself, William peeped round the

kitchen door into the yard. As there was no one about, he slipped outside. It was all very still. Not a sound could be heard. William looked round him for a short time. What a strange cold world it seemed!

A pretty sparrow fluttered down into the yard to pick up some crumbs, and William scampered along after Dicky Bird to see if it would play with him. But just as William got close, Dicky gave a chirp of fear and flew up to the tree top.

“Well, I never,” thought William, “I must be growing big, like my father, for Dicky Bird was afraid of me. I will have to see whom else I can frighten. Perhaps I shall be a



great hunter like father some day.
What a lovely place the world is!”

William then went running around the yard chasing some leaves which were blowing about. Suddenly he spied a hole under the gate. He stuck his little head through the hole. “Meow; another big world, and what funny things in it! Plenty of

people that look like Master and Mistress ! ”

But when William saw a horse and cart he was greatly frightened. It must be a giant, he thought, as he quickly drew his head back. For a few minutes he sat still and wondered. Should he dare go out ?

“ After all,” he thought, “ I’m growing big now. I mustn’t let anything frighten me.”

Again he popped out his head, and oh ! dear me ! what was *that*, that had just gone past ? A huge monster on four wheels instead of feet ! It made a tremendous “ chug, chug ! ” noise when it moved, and kept shouting, “ Honk, honk ! ”

Of course, it was only a motor



car, but William had never seen one before.

William was so frightened at this strange-looking thing that he felt quite giddy, and didn't know what he was doing, so instead of going back into the yard, he ran out into the street. But now he was more frightened. There were so many people passing along that he ran as

fast as he could the whole length of the street. Then he stopped to rest and tried to think.

“Oh! What am I to do?” he thought. “Here I am, and I don’t know how to get home. I expect I’m right in the middle of the world now. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Why did I ever run away?”

He looked round to see where he could go, and there, running along the street, nearly beside him, was a white dog. At the sight of William, the dog began to bark loudly. William stood up and put his back into a great hump and spat noisily at the dog, but it only made him bark louder than ever, so William turned and ran



faster than he had ever run before. He ran and ran and *ran*, until he found himself in the country, where there were only hedges instead of houses along the road. William was so puffed now that he really couldn't run any longer, so he looked round, and was glad to find that the dog was no longer following him.

"This is better," panted William. "There are not so many monsters in this part of the world. But I *do* feel hungry. I wish I had some dinner."

When he had walked along the road a little way he saw a large house in the middle of a pretty garden. William ran up to the door and mewed loudly.

When the lady who opened the door saw a dirty kitten on the doorstep, she cried, "Shoo! shoo! Go away, dirty little kitten. This isn't your home."

So once again William found himself out on the road, tired and hungry. By this time it was raining, so poor William was a sorry-looking kitten. He crept under a hedge for



shelter and stayed there all night, shivering with cold.

Next morning William started off again to try to find a home. He limped along the road very slowly now, for his paws were sore. He came to a nice white cottage at the side of the road, and crept up to the

door. He sniffed round the doorstep and mewed to get in. No one came, so he mewed louder.

Then he heard a little voice calling, "Mummie, I hear a kitten crying outside. Do open the door and let me see it, please."

And in less than a minute a lady opened the door, and when she saw William crying on the doorstep, she picked him up and carried him inside. She took him over to a cot where a little girl was lying, and said, "Look, Tessa darling, here is a poor, cold and hungry kitten. He must be lost."

"Oh! Mummie, may I keep him to be my very own kitten? I would love him." And to the great



delight of William, Tessa's mother said, "Yes."

She gave him a large saucer of warm milk, which William quickly lapped up, and then he jumped into a basket which had been put beside the fire for him. On a nice warm

blanket William was very glad to curl up and go to sleep.

After he had slept for a few hours, he woke up and stretched first one paw, then another; then



he stood up on his tiptoes, arching his back in a lovely stretch.

“ Oh ! ” thought William, “ did I dream of that awful time or did it really happen ? ” He looked down at his orange-coloured fur coat. “ Ugh ! it *was* real, and not a dream, for I am filthy dirty. It will take hours to get my coat clean and my whiskers brushed, and I should be ashamed if my little mistress saw me like this when she woke up. ”

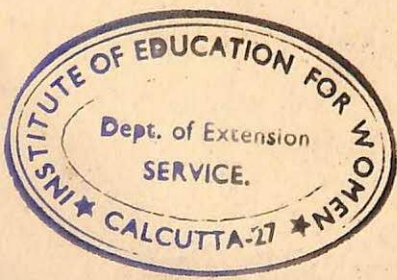
William worked hard to clean himself, and when he was giving his coat the last lick, he heard his little mistress calling to him. He jumped up on to her cot and rubbed himself against her, purring loudly to show how pleased he was.



Little Tessa was very pleased too. She whispered to William how glad she was that he had come to her house, as she was very lonely, and said, "I have been ill and can't run about and play for many weeks yet until I am really well again, so you will stay and play with me, won't you?"

And William gave a little happy "Meow," and rubbed his head against her to show her how happy he would be to stay with her. He used to tuck himself into a corner of the cot at night to sleep beside Tessa, and in the daytime they played for hours together. William purred all the time, to show his little mistress that he thought he was a very lucky kitten indeed to have found such a good home. Tessa no longer minded having to live in bed now that she had William beside her.

So after all, William's adventure turned out much better than he really deserved.





BROOM BUSH SCHOOL

“What is a Broom Bush?” said Mary.

“Well,” answered her Mother, “you can always tell a broom bush because it has tiny green leaves and is covered with beautiful yellow flowers like pea flowers. And when

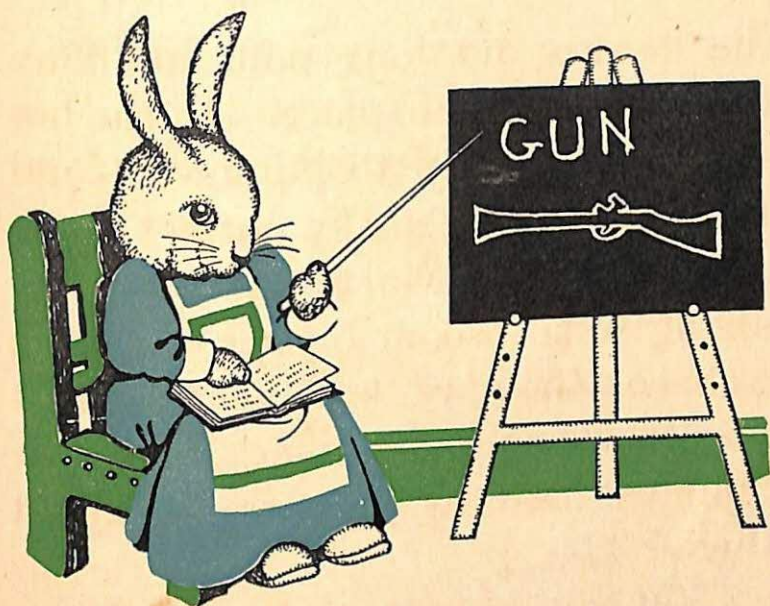
the flowers die, long pods like tiny peapods take their place. In the hot summer sun the pods burst with loud POPS, and the seeds fly out."

"Oh!" said Mary, "I remember seeing some broom bushes when we were on holiday last year. Don't you remember, Mother, how the bunnies used to play round about them?"

"Of course!" answered her Mother, "I remember very well, and this story is about a Miss Bunn who kept Broom Bush School. It was the popping of the broom pods that frightened her school children."

"Do tell me all about it, Mother," said Mary.

So Mother began.



“Dear, dear!” said Miss Bunn.
“Where are my children to-day?”
She looked up at the sun. (This was
her clock.) “The children are very
late!”

POP! went a funny little noise.
The schoolmistress jumped and ran
a little way. Then she came back.

She sat up very straight, listening, with her pointed ears stuck up, and her little nose twitching. Miss Bunn's sharp eyes saw something. Three brown bunnies were hurrying along to school.

Moosie, Doosie and Shoosie Brown stood before the mistress.

"Good afternoon, Ma'am," said they politely.

"Good afternoon, children. Why are you late? You bunnies never have colds, you are not asked to stay to mind the baby, and your shoes do not need mending. Why then are you late?"

"Please, Ma'am, we saw a swarm of bees," said Moosie, who was the biggest of the three.



“And we forgot the time,” added Shoosie, the middle-sized one.

“We are sorry, Ma’am,” said Doosie, who was very little, but had beautiful manners.

POP!

Miss Bunn jumped. Moosie,

Shoosie and Doosie ran away. Then they slowly came back. Miss Bunn just stared at them. They all kept very still. They were frightened.

"Where are the others?" asked the schoolmistress at last. Moosie looked over her shoulder. "There!" she said.

POP!

Poor Moosie jumped ever so far. By the time the rabbits got over their fright from the POP, two more pupils had arrived. They were Dimpsie and Dumpsie Drab. Now, the Browns were good little fellows, clean and tidy. But the Drabs were not. All the mud seemed to be on Dumpsie's feet and coat. Bits of grass and prickles stuck in Dimpsie's fur. Miss Bunn often wondered

whether she ought to allow them to come to her school at all.

“But Child Education is so important,” she would say to her friends. “I must do my best for the poor Drabs.”

So the Browns and the Drabs had afternoon school. Those



tiresome POPS went on all the time, making mistress and children restless.

"It's a man with a gun," said Shoosie to Dumpsie.

"It's people having a picnic," whispered Doosie to Dimpsie.

"Stop talking," ordered Miss Bunn.

"It's the children from the farm," said Moosie to himself.

The rabbits danced and drilled and said their lessons, but it was all very hard work, because the POP went on every few minutes.

Then Dumpsie Drab thought he saw a mouse under the broom bush.

Forgetting the POP noises and his schoolmistress, he ran swiftly to the



place where a bright eye peeped.
He bumped into the stem of the bush.

POP! POP!

There was a rattle, followed by the
sound of something falling in a
shower.

Every bunny child scampered
home. That was the end of school
for the day. Miss Bunn went off

too. After a while she came back. She really did want to know what had caused the popping sound.

POP!

She looked up at the broom bush.

POP!

She saw a dry pod burst open.

POP!

Its sheath curled back and tiny seeds were flung out from it on to the earth.

POP!

Miss Bunn hopped forward and looked hard at this. She scraped the seeds into a heap. "Ha!" said she. "Now I can see that the broom pod bursts in the heat of the sun and scatters its seeds on the earth. How silly of me to be frightened."

Miss Bunn sat for a very long time in one place. She was thinking hard. At last she said, "Wonderful! This will be something fresh to teach the children."

Then she hurried home to tea.

EXERCISES

WILLIAM, THE KITTEN

1. Why was the kitten called William?
2. Why did the sparrow fly away from William?
3. Why was Tessa very glad to see William?

BROOM BUSH SCHOOL

1. How would you know a broom bush?
2. What were the names of the school-children?
3. What did the schoolmistress find out about the broom bush?

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- 1B. JENNY AND THE OLD HORSE
and ANOTHER OLD HORSE.
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- 3B. JENNY AND THE SWALLOWS.
- 4B. ALICE AND THE WHITE RABBIT
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- 13B. JACOB'S BIRTHDAY BREAKFAST
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and HOW THE WOOD-PIGEON BUILT HER NEST.
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